The Sketch

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ARNHEM CHIEF FOR BURMA—GENERAL BROWNING.

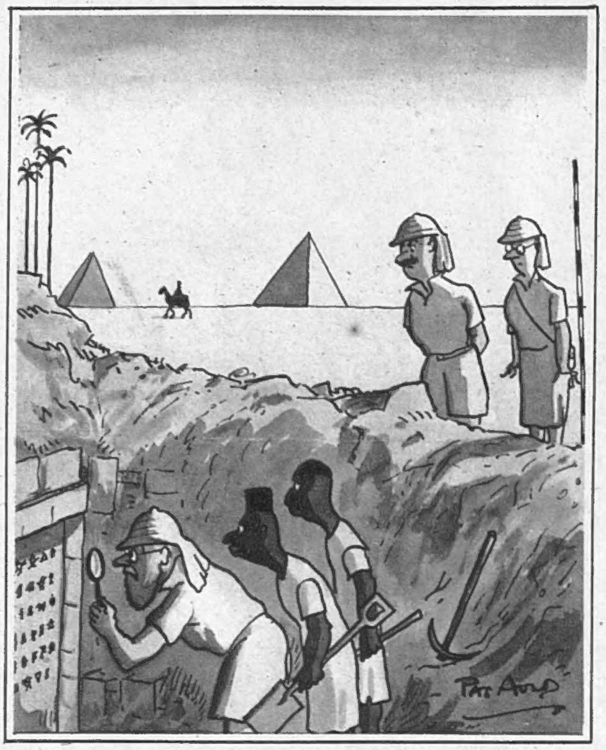
LIEUT.-GENERAL F. A. M. BROWNING *recently took leave of survivors of the heroic First Airborne Division which he commanded at Arnhem, before taking up his new post in Burma, where he will be Chief of Staff to the Supreme Commander South-East Asia, Admiral Lord Louis Mountbatten. This at-home group shows him with his novelist-wife, Daphne du Maurier,* "KITS," *aged four,* FLAVIA, *aged six, and* TESSA, *who is eleven years old.*

MOTLEY NOTES.

By ALAN KEMP

Six Twenty-fifths. The sixth Christmas of war! It is difficult to realise. Time is strangely distorted by this war. Sometimes one feels as if it had been going on all one's life; at other times "pre-war" seems only the other day. Actually, there have been more than six of these unnatural Christmases, for as one looks back one does not remember any season of real peace and good will for at least a decade. However, it takes more than a decade of international uproar to knock the ancient spirit out of Noel, and I hope that yours was not lacking in the "festive," even if it was "emergency" festive. Not many homes, I fear, without their heartaches or their anxieties, not many in which there was not a special and solemn sincerity in the toast to Absent Friends. But we can be sure that there has been a pretty good imitation of the festive for the absent ones too, whether they have achieved it in ice or mud or tropical jungle. The Old Gentleman is remarkably active and ubiquitous for his age, and singularly indifferent to shot and shell or other impediments to movement!

Doves and Vultures. Christmas seems to bring out the best in the best and the worst in the worst. It offers opportunities not only to doves of peace, but to birds of prey; but it is deplorable that these unseasonable vultures should have chosen the young to batten upon. I have not tested the matter, but from all I read I gather that a slab of rough wood and a couple of nails, parading as a child's toy, cost a king's ransom—and, unfortunately, there are plenty of mugs who will pay the ransom. Even the turkey itself has become a bird of prey, but preyed upon rather than preying. The gangs have been out despoiling the poultry farms, and in one county all the police have been out *en masse* doing battle against them. Other gangs have been selling the ill-gotten birds at anything up to 10s. per lb.—and again there are mugs who will buy from them.



"Yes, it's the tomb all right . . . but it says on it, 'Not to be opened till Christmas' . . . !"

DRAWN BY PAT AULD.

No More Parades. How to deal with these pests and marauders? In my opinion, we have stood down the Home Guard too soon. It would have been a grand finale battle-practice to send them out, with plenty of ammunition, after the Christmas brigands. However, the authorities have decided otherwise, and I join with all other citizens in offering my respectful adieux to the Old and Bold. As a humble member of another service, I permit myself one little grouse. The Wardens continue at the post of duty, and are quite ready to continue, but they are being much thinned out—rather prematurely, as it seems to me. The Fire Guards are also stood down, and responsibility for fire and fury reverts to the poor old Wardens. If any little incendiary games began again, the responsibility would not be light. Never mind—we are quite equal to being a small *corps d'élite*! We were first in, and then we were everybody's meat. Very likely we shall be last out, and we'll "go quietly." I see that one Home Guard Sergeant, aged 81, says: "Heaven knows what I shall do now!" He need not lack an outlet for his youthful energy; a hearty welcome awaits him in the Civil Defence.

Wrong Again. One could have wished that our British Christmas had not been marred by a singular lack of peace and good will among men in liberated countries. I express no political opinions here, but I am perturbed at the prospect if all the internal dissensions (and there certainly will be no lack of them) of all the European countries are going to be political crises at Westminster. An occupying Power is, and is bound to be, in the position of the man who intervenes in a dog-fight or between husband and wife—and we all know what happens to him. It is a little hard to have to take all the black eyes and all the blame as well. That, however, seems to be this country's traditional function in the opinion of some, and Mr. A. P. Herbert sums up our sins very well when he writes:

> Nobody's wrong but England — and England's always wrong—
> Too late — or else too early— too soft—or else too strong:
> And when for once the wide world begins to praise her name,
> Her own sons crowd and hurry to shout her back to shame.

"All right, Mother, all right; but I'd still like to know wot's to be done with 'Itler *after* you've scratched 'is bloomin' eyes out!" [DRAWN BY SILENUS.]

He 's Dead Again ! But let me not dwell on these incongruous accompaniments of a season intended for happier things. It is a New Year of hope and confidence, and, under wise advice, we have learned to restrain our confidence within due bounds. Not many, I think, are now so given to wishful thinking as to swallow all the Hitler stories, the latest (up to the time of going to press) being that he has been bumped off by Goering, in person. There will be plenty of bumping-off among the Big Shots when the time comes, and it would not be a bad way of dealing with war criminals to supply them with hand-grenades and compel them to settle their differences among themselves. We need not, however, anticipate the tournament by flights of feverish imagination. Let us confine ourselves, in our New Year expectations, to some of the more promising prospects which open up on the Home Front.

Brighter Politics. We may, for example, see a bigger, better and brighter House of Commons (no reference to General Elections). Parliament has been considering the whole question of its *Lebensraum*, which seems to be inadequate — though you would not think so to look at it. Commander Stephen King-Hall is not for half-measures; he wants to see something "really big." He pictures a sort of skyscraper annexe to the House, with a communicating tunnel provided with a series of moving staircases. The express escalator would deliver a Member, at the summons of the Whip, from his skyscraper office to his "place" at a speed of 20 m.p.h. Then there would be a switchboard which, "by merely pressing things like typewriter keys," would show everybody within the precincts what speaker was on his feet at any given moment. This seems a little hard on the less entertaining Back Benchers, who might find themselves condemned permanently to "addressing the despatch boxes." Then there is to be a television theatre under the Thames, where all the proceedings of the Chamber would be reproduced as large as life. Well, we need imagination in our politics, and here at least is an exciting prospect of a really modern, pepped-up Parliament !

"I say, Dad, could I have something breakable this year ?"

DRAWN BY S. L. BRETTELL.

The Holocaust. It might consider, as one of its first measures, the possibility of that Basic Ration some time in 1945. But even if we get it, it will not be hailed with joy in all quarters. Some pedestrians are saying that the prospect is grim for them, though not all go so far as Professor Joad (if he is correctly reported) in asking for the complete suppression of private cars. It is certainly not a comforting thought that in the month of October three times as many civilians were killed on the roads as by enemy bombs. I doubt whether the foot-sloggers will derive much satisfaction from an illustration, which lies before me, of a post-war car which will do fifty to the gallon at an average speed of sixty: and it is to cost only £100. As a quiet, law-abiding motorist of the non-Brooklands type, I am not sure that I am cheered by the prospect myself. It is a nice question whether it is going to be safer to be in a car or out of it. I am almost tempted to sell my unpretentious little bus for the thousand pounds or so which I understand it would fetch, and invest in a tank. That ought to be fairly safe. Meanwhile, I am prepared to sell my life dearly for a basic ration.

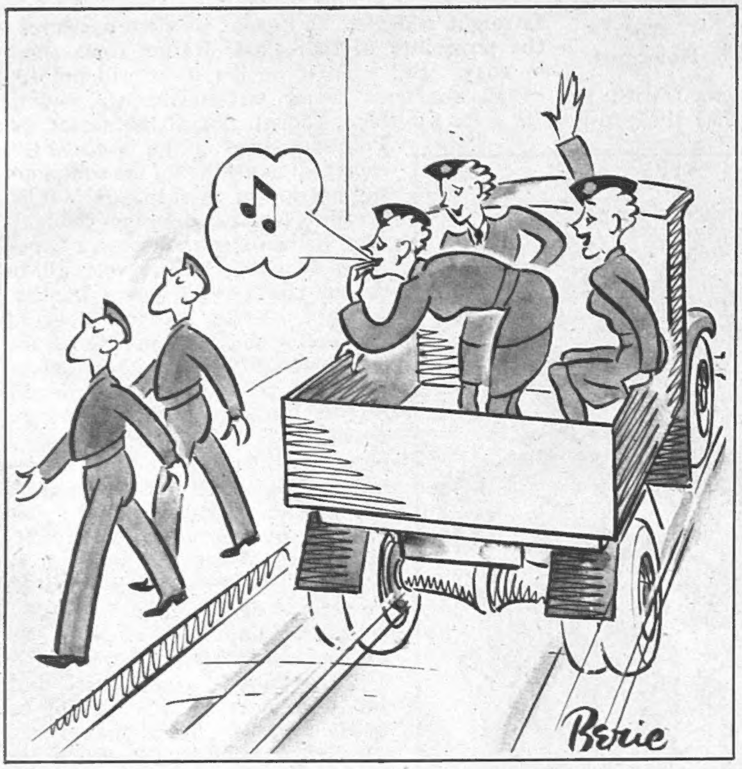
Telegraph More. It is too much to hope, I suppose, that 1945 will bring us more and better paper; but I hope steps will be taken to put down one form of reckless extravagance. I mean the scandalous wastage of paper caused by patching up old envelopes. I get envelopes sometimes on which the layers and accretions resemble the labels on an old, much-travelled trunk. I am sure they far exceed the paperage of a new envelope or series of envelopes. However, for the really grand manner of paper prodigality we turn naturally to the Civil Service. I see that certain bureaucrats of Blackpool recently sent 3000 telegrams to the Prime Minister and Members of Parliament, protesting against their "deportation" to Newcastle. It is a nice point, both of economics and of patriotism, whether the Postmaster - General gains more than the Minister of Supply loses. Perhaps the senders took the view, not altogether unreasonably, that wartime telegraph forms cannot really count as paper, being of

[Continued overleaf.

"Captain of your soul ? *Captain?* Listen, me lad—while you 're here you 're not even the blooming temporary, acting, unpaid lance-corporal of your perishing soul ! "

DRAWN BY MASKEE.

SALVAGE ALL YOUR OLD LETTERS—FOR VICTORY



T'OTHER WAY ON.

DRAWN BY BERIC.

"How many mistakes can you do to the minute?"

DRAWN BY S. L. BRETTELL.

a substance quite incapable of definition.

Miles of Glass. Industry, I am glad to note, is taking the forward view at the turn of the year. I have been reading about one firm alone which hopes to produce 250 miles of glass a day—and even that will not be enough. As the firm has been established for 118 years, some might regard it as "old-fashioned," but, like a good many old-fashioned things in this country, it seems able to adapt itself to modern needs and to respond with some spirit to unexpected demands. Just at the moment, I cannot help envying some of the workers in this huge factory, who are said to toil "in a perpetual heat wave." But I dare say I am biased, because to-day happens to be a critical day in my personal Battle for Fuel, and I am capable of envying a stoker in the Red Sea in mid-summer—or, indeed, a sausage in a frying-pan.

Loaves and Fishes. There seems to be also great and forward-looking activity in the culinary world. I have been hearing of the bracing experiences of a pupil at an Army Catering Centre, where 800 cooks of both sexes prepare 5000 experimental meals every day. More than 150,000 of them have now been through this battle-course. Should you be depressed by the thought of this vast army of "experimental" cooks being let loose on the nation after the war, take comfort from the fact that it is part of their discipline to eat their own meals. I don't know whether the same applies to the battalions of young women from Domestic Training Colleges who have volunteered to cook meals for the bomb-damage repairers in Southern England, but if a high standard of domesticity does not result from this embattled Kitchen Front, then at least one part of the Great War will have been fought in vain.

Bags, Ever Hot.

But perhaps in that Better World, which we hope 1945 may usher in, there will be no cookery, but only pre-cookery or self-cookery. We have heard much of ingenious tins of self-heating soup and self-cooking stew issued to the troops. I think I prefer the prospect of "experimental" to that of self-cooking repasts; but I *am* attracted by the R.A.F. "pocket stoves"—officially listed as "Bags, ever hot"—which the enemy are now said to be copying. A little chemical pad in a rubber bag, a few drops of water—and lo! a complete hot-water bottle, good for five or six hours (the official "ever" is a trifle romantic). When you think of the gulf between this portable central-heating system and the warming-pan, the hot brick, or even the ponderous stoneware urn (of which I still possess a specimen)—why, there you have a whole perspective of the March of Science.

Lines of Communication. Strange and ever new is the language of head-lines. "Russians are Through." I happened to have been reading an American newspaper when I saw this caption, and for a moment it conveyed to me, as it would convey to any American reader: "Russians are Finished." I hope there will be no unfavourable reactions in Moscow. A little later I read: "Did Bathsick Nick Kill Mrs. Hippo?" I think that must have given satisfaction, and rightly, to the journalist who compressed into it a poignant domestic tragedy of the Manchester Zoo. I cannot reproduce all the harrowing details here, but I learn from them the interesting fact that a young hippopotamus may become homicidal, and even matricidal, for lack of a daily bath. One influential school of zoologists is of opinion that the tendency is less marked in the young of the human race.

A dinner of the SIGNALS SERVICES *(British and American officers) was the signal for our artist's immediate attendance with pencil and paper. The fighting services depend for much of their communications on G.P.O. telephones and telegraphs, and readers will be interested to see for themselves some of those men upon whom devolves signal service.* (CARICATURES BY FRED MAY.)

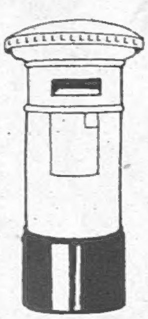
The one-hundred-and-fifth of our SERIES OF PLATES IN FULL COLOUR *published in this issue of "The Sketch", is by* DAVID WRIGHT.

"MY MISTAKE, 'ORACE—IT AIN'T JERRY—IT'S ME!"

DRAWN BY FRANK REYNOLDS.

Please forward

By JOYCE DENNYS.



MY DEAR ROBERT—At breakfast one Sunday morning not long ago, Charles said, " By this time to-morrow I shall no longer be in the Guards (Home)." He said it quite cheerfully.

" I 'm coming to see you turned down," I said.

" Stand down is the correct term," said Charles. " Where are my Boots ? "

I looked at him in horror, for up till now Charles has not walked in any Home Guard procession, his habit being to drive slowly and pompously at the tail-end, with a Red Cross Orderly beside him and a stretcher strapped to the top of his car. Charles has slim and elegant feet, and though he often said how lovely his Home Guard Boots were, and how useful they would be if he ever took to gardening, and how kind it was of the Government to let him have them for his very own, he never put them on.

" Aren't they rather large for you ? " I said.

" Enormous," said Charles.

" How far will you have to walk ? "

" From the Police Station to the Green and back again."

" You 'll never do it."

" I will," said Charles, with a bull-dog expression.

" No wonder the Germans can't beat us," I said proudly.

Charles wouldn't let me soften his boots with dubbin, in case it took away the shine, so determined was he to cut a dash at the Stand Down. Even the polishing of his greatcoat buttons, a task hitherto performed, not without complaint, by his wife, was taken from me, and with boots and belt given to our Evacuee Father, who is himself a soldier, and who spent practically the whole of Saturday bringing them to perfection.

" Limping slightly."

On Sunday we dressed him up and he was indeed without spot or blemish. Our hearts swelled with pride as we looked at him.

" How do I look ? " said Charles anxiously.

" Lovely," I said.

" That belt has come up a treat," said the Father Evacuee. " I wish I could have had it a few weeks ago."

" Of course, with those funny little hats I *do* think people look better without their spectacles," I said.

" If I take off my spectacles, I shan't be able to see. Don't be so military, Henrietta. Just because all your relations are in the Army——"

" I 'm sorry, Charles. How are your feet ? "

" Kind of numb," said Charles simply.

" I think you ought to have a stick."

" I won't have a stick," said Charles, whose nervousness was making him cross. " I 'm not a soldier, I never have been a soldier, and I 've never even pretended to be a soldier and I 'm not going to begin now."

I took up a good position on the Green and Lady B. joined me. It was very cold. Dogs and children kept running out on to the space reserved for the Parade and were chased away by Special Constables.

Mrs. Savernack arrived on her bicycle. " They 're starting," she said. " Charles hadn't got a stick. I had to fetch him one from home. You ought to have known better, Henrietta."

Very faintly in the distance a band began playing, and I experienced the sensation which Charles describes as the leaping of my military blood.

" Here they come," said Lady B.

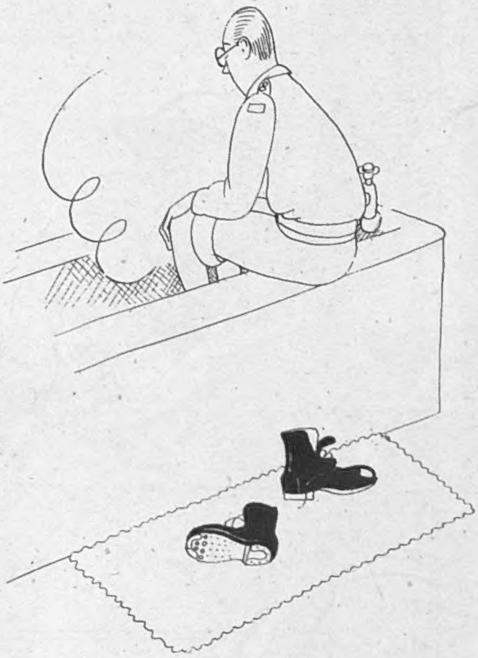
The Home Guard marched past. Familiar faces under unfamiliar hats, and, whatever their private feelings, expressions of indifference.

" Where 's Charles ? " said Lady B.

" In the van," said Mrs. Savernack.

" I knew he 'd get a lift if he could," I said.

" Really, Henrietta ! " said Mrs. Savernack. " Your jokes get sillier and sillier."



" Paddling his elegant feet in hot water."

At the very end of the procession came Charles. He looked rather pale, and was out of step and limping slightly. The Home Guard formed three sides of a square, presented arms and stood at ease and all that with a certain degree of smartness, but still expressionless. The High-Ups walked slowly up and down the lines, pausing here and there to speak to a man. I began to wish passionately that they would speak to Charles. They did.

" Look ! Look ! " I cried, pinching Lady B.'s arm and feeling like a mother whose child has been singled out at the dancing class to do the tambourine dance alone.

" I expect it 's because his stick is wrong," said Mrs. Savernack.

" ' We might hang them up and grow ferns in them.' "

The High-Ups made speeches, but their voices were drowned by the yells of Americans playing baseball in a field near by. " Sh-sh ! " said Mrs. Savernack angrily. But the baseball game, which must have reached an exciting stage, yelled its way in crescendo through the Vicar's address and the prayer, but we held our own when it came to " O God, Our Help in Ages Past." Then the band played, " We are the Boys of the Old Brigade," and the Home Guard marched away looking, I thought, faintly pleased with itself, as well it might.

" I suppose Henrietta's crying ? " said Mrs. Savernack.

" Yes," said Lady B., " and so am I."

When I got home, I found Charles sitting on the edge of the bath paddling his elegant feet in hot water. " Was it awful ? " I said.

" Agony," said Charles. " I think some of my toes are broken."

" Of course, they 're beautiful Boots," I said. " I was thinking we might hang them up and grow ferns in them."

" Or robins might nest in them," said Charles.

" I 'd like to see one of those baseball games, wouldn't you ? "

" Very much."

" Lady B. said it was symbolic of after the war. Us doing something quite sensible and harmless and everybody yelling us down."

" And us going steadily ahead as though we didn't notice," said Charles.

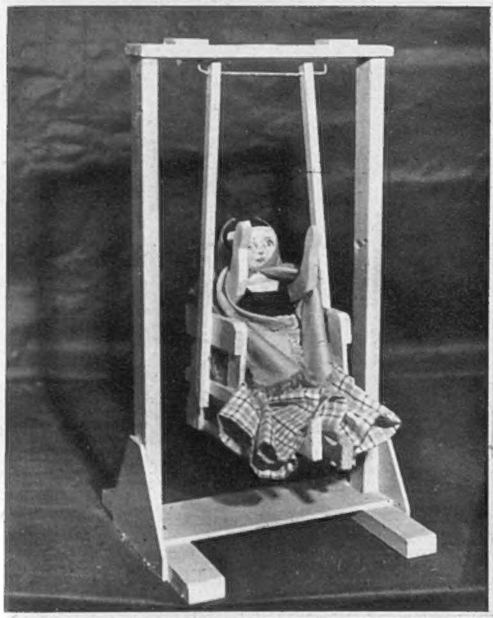
Always your affectionate

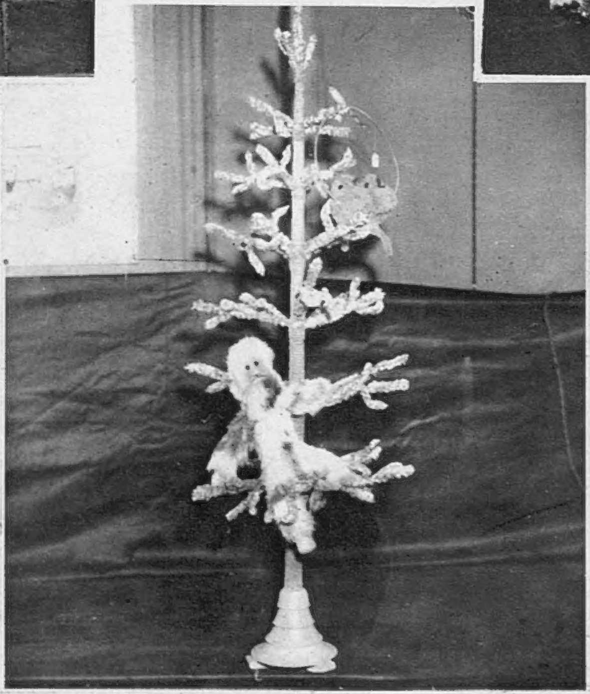
Childhood's Friend,

HENRIETTA.

HERE ARE BELGIAN TOYS.

FEAST your eyes on a few of the 3000 Belgian toys shown in the Christmas gifts and toy fair organised by the Belgian Red Cross at 68, New Bond Street. The fair, which was opened by the Belgian Ambassador, will last over the holidays and proceeds will go to Lady Oliphant's Relief Fund for Mothers and Children in Belgium. The toys are realistic and very well made. Look, for instance, at the charming terrier, the hairy sheep-dog, the pretty doll-faces. And there are lead soldiers, poilus and mounted dragoons, with military bands, dolls in velvet siren suits, velvet rabbits, and all sorts of other toys.





CHRISTMAS PARTIES AND A ROYAL SOME NOTABLE PEOPLE AND THEIR

Portrait-painter LIEUT. PHILIP STEEGMAN, R.N.V.R., *is on the forecasing of submarine "Sceptre," finishing his picture of the commander,* LIEUT. McINTOSH, D.S.O., M.B.E., D.S.C., R.N.

LADY LOUIS MOUNTBATTEN *(left), Superintendent-in-Chief, St. John Ambulance Brigade, and the* COUNTESS OF LIMERICK, C.B.E., *distributed gifts from a Christmas-tree at a party at the Donoughmore Club for wounded soldiers from the London and Home Counties Hospitals.*

Right: MRS. ANTHONY KIMMINS, *wife of the broadcaster, playwright and author, attended the At Home in connection with the gala première of Twentieth Century-Fox's film "Wilson," fixed for January 4, in aid of Toc H.*

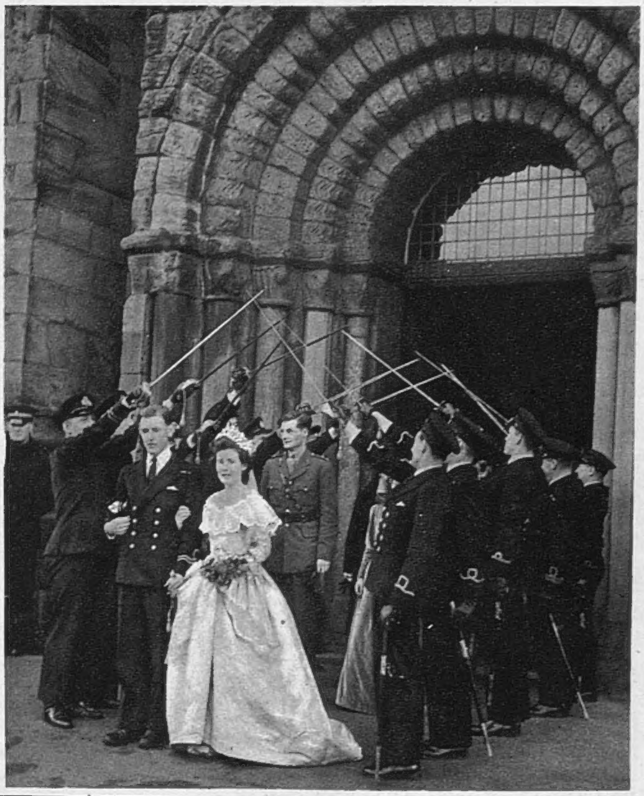
"FIRST SERGEANT FRANCO," *mascot of the 34th Division H.Q. Command Post, Fifth Army, had the honour of snapshotting the Prime Minister. This photograph was sent to us by the Sec. Officers' Kit Replacement Bureau, which has helped some 1200 officers who have lost kit under conditions which do not admit of a charge on the War Department. No payment is made for these kit replacements.*

Left: H.M. THE QUEEN *and* H.R.H. PRINCESS ELIZABETH *recently inspected an Army Training Establishment in Southern England. They took a special interest in the catering arrangements, and saw the fare served to soldiers in training.*

Right: LT.-COLONEL D. T. DOBIE, D.S.O., *known as "the Mad Colonel of Arnhem,"* married MISS ROSEMARY HUNTER BLAIR, *daughter of Lt.-Colonel David Hunter Blair, Gordon Highlanders, at St. Saviour's, Walton Street.*

VISIT, WEDDINGS, STARS AND ARTISTS: ACTIVITIES AT HOME AND OVERSEAS.

LADY CONINGHAM, *wife of Air Chief-Marshal Sir Arthur Coningham, officiated at the bran-tub at the St. Nicholas Day party for Belgian children held at the R.A.F. Malcolm Club, in Brussels.*



The marriage of LIEUT. C. D. R. WHITTLE, R.N.V.R., *to* MISS GRIZEL MARY DICK *took place at Dunfermline Abbey. The bridegroom, who has been mentioned in dispatches, has served in the Mediterranean, the Channel and in Russian convoys.*

The marriage of SECOND OFFICER MARGARET WYBRANTS RICHARDS, W.R.N.S., *daughter of Lieut.-Colonel Hamilton, to* LIEUT. T. C. McLAUGHLIN, R.C.N.V.R., *of Winnipeg, took place at the King's Chapel of the Savoy.*

Left: SIR FRANCIS ROSE, BT., *recently completed a painting of the Three Trees of Chu'ang Tzu, destined for the Chinese Embassy. He is an expert on modern China, and lectures on Sun Yat Sen's three principles of government.*

Left: GENE TIERNEY, *who plays the title-rôle in the Twentieth Century-Fox murder mystery-film "Laura," recently seen at the Empire, is the mother of* ANTOINETTE DARIA CASSINI. *In private life Gene is the wife of Lieut. Oleg Cassini.*

Right: MISS JEAN KENT, *screen-star of "2000 Women" and "Fanny by Gaslight," opened the Fun Fair in aid of Toc H. and Prisoners of War Relatives Association, at the Corn Exchange, Newbury, and auctioned toys and signed autographs.*

CINEMA CAMEOS.

By C. A. LEJEUNE.

AFTER a diet of the rich, piquant dishes of Hollywood, there is a lot to be said for a nice, plain British documentary like "WESTERN APPROACHES" (general release shortly). "Western Approaches" was made for the Crown Film Unit by an extremely talented young man called Pat Jackson, and acted by serving officers and men of the Allied navies and merchant fleets. There isn't a professional player in the cast, and for reasons probably of Service etiquette even the worthy mariners remain anonymous. Austere is the word for "Western Approaches"—austere and dignified. The only condescension to popular taste is that the film has been made in Technicolor.

The running theme of the story is the plight of twenty-four men, survivors of a torpedoed merchantman, who spend fourteen days in a lifeboat in the Atlantic. The film keeps coming back to the lifeboat; recording the men's talk, their hopes and doubts of rescue, the signals they try to make, their increasing weakness as the days go by, the phases of delirium and fever of one man who has been wounded in the head, their delicate handling, as if it were liquid diamonds, of the tiny store of water.

Meanwhile, a couple of hundred miles away on the convoy routes, a larger drama is taking shape. A heavily-laden convoy, with an air escort of Hudsons, has left New York for Britain, and is weaving its way through a U-boat nest. A German submarine commander, picking up the lifeboat's faint distress signal, plans to use the little ship as a decoy for the bigger ones. The trick succeeds. The merchantman *Leander*, which has had to go ahead of the convoy because she is too sluggish in answering the helm at the slow speed of the convoy's lamest duck, also picks up the lifeboat's feeble S O S. Steaming to the rescue, she comes within range of the U-boat's torpedoes. Frantically the men in the lifeboat, who have seen the U-boat's periscope, try to signal to the approaching *Leander*. Their own rescue is no longer of importance; the big ship must be made to turn aside before the submarine can attack her. Their signals are partly successful. *Leander* dodges the first torpedo, but the second hits her forward.

"The Impatient Years" (Tivoli, December 24) stars JEAN ARTHUR *as Janie and* LEE BOWMAN *as Andy in a story of temperamental divorce and reunion. The venue is San Francisco.*

Mauled, but not killed, the merchantman then plays her own trick. The master orders the crew to the boats, but stays aboard himself, hidden, with several men, including the gunner. When the U-boat surfaces to finish off the abandoned ship, *Leander* sinks her, clean as a stone in a pond, with gun-fire. The men in the lifeboat are taken on board, and *Leander* limps back to rejoin the convoy under her own steam.

"Western Approaches" is no arm-chair sea-story. In the rigorous manner of its type, it was made by the real people in the real place. The unit and the crew spent seven months a few miles offshore in the Atlantic shooting the lifeboat scenes. They had to wait on fogs and sunshine, wind and water. Sometimes a gust of wind would swing the lifeboat round in the middle of a shot, so that the shore was "in picture." Since the action was supposed to take place in mid-Atlantic, the shot would be useless. Sometimes the conditions were perfect; the wind steady, the sun shining, the sea just right, and then a Spitfire appeared and flew about overhead, testing its guns, which made synchronised sound-shooting impossible. "Ole Debbil Sea," too, was apt to play the very deuce with colour photography, changing from blue to green to grey in a matter of seconds, as the light struck it. But the documentary boys have learnt to acquire patience as their first asset, and still prefer a tussle with natural conditions to a bit of cosy home-shooting, with a ship swung on rockers, artificial lights and a studio tank.

A great many people are going to like "Western Approaches." The film has a sense of manhood and an enormous honesty. It is full of sea and sea-air. Those huge green combers, that flying spray, those wracks of storm-cloud are the real thing and no nonsense. There are no landlubbers here, pretending to navigate ships. The convoy is a real convoy; the masters and men are doing the jobs they do in real life; and the film gains enormously in authority. It is a fine picture, although I cannot agree with the people who call it the finest of all sea pictures. The finest works, even works of realism, are less episodic than "Western Approaches." They have a formal shape, an end as well as a beginning. "Western Approaches" ends, as it were, in the middle of a period. It is all very well to know that *Leander* is going to rejoin the convoy, but you want to see her doing it. All the drama of the piece calls out for a final shot of the merchant armada sweeping on towards Britain; every ship in station, with its comfortable air cover; the triumphant peroration, the dying fall.

THE BEST PLAYS.

* * * "BLITHE SPIRIT" *(Duchess)*. Noel Coward's play. Penelope Ward, Joyce Carey, Nicholas Phipps.

* * * "UNCLE HARRY" *(Garrick)*. Murder thriller, with Michael Redgrave and Beatrix Lehmann.

* * OLD VIC THEATRE COMPANY *(New)*. Laurence Olivier, Ralph Richardson, Sybil Thorndike, Nicholas Hannen in repertory.

* * "ARSENIC AND OLD LACE" *(Strand)*. Lilian Braithwaite, Mary Jerrold, Naunton Wayne, Edmund Willard.

* * "WHILE THE SUN SHINES" *(Globe)*. Farce. Jane Baxter, Hugh Wakefield.

* * "SWEETER AND LOWER" *(Ambassadors)*. Second edition of "Sweet and Low" revue: Hermione Gingold and Henry Kendall.

* * "TO-MORROW THE WORLD" *(Aldwych)*. Nazi youth. Robert Harris, Elizabeth Allan, Jean Cadell, David O'Brien.

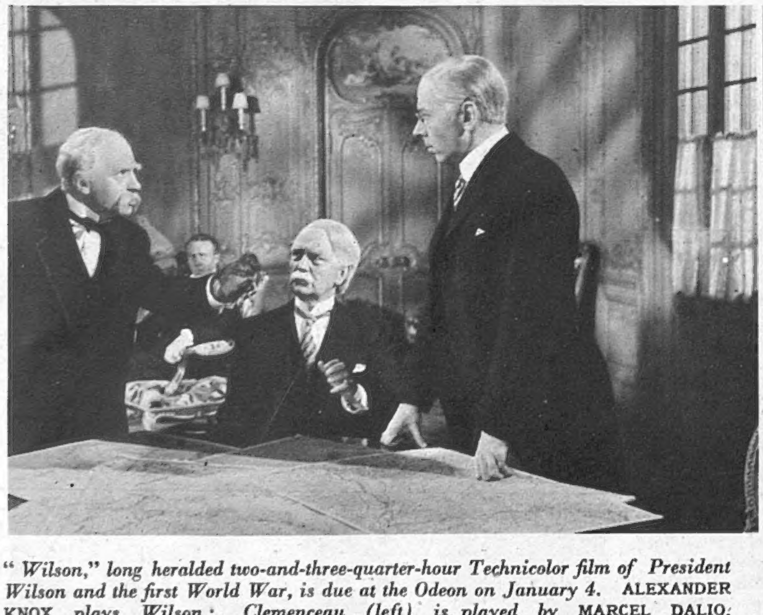
* * SADLER'S WELLS OPERA SEASON *(Princes)*.

* * JOHN GIELGUD in Repertory *(Haymarket)*. Yvonne Arnaud, Peggy Ashcroft, Leslie Banks, Leon Quartermaine.

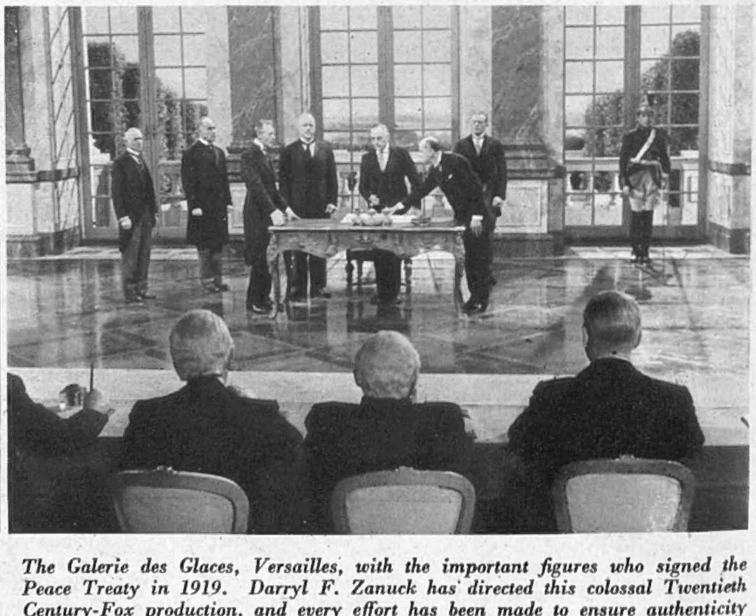
* * "QUIET WEEK-END" *(Playhouse)*. Esther McCracken's comedy. Frank Cellier, Marjorie Fielding, George Thorpe.

PANTOMIMES: "GOODY TWO SHOES" *(Coliseum)*; "BABES IN THE WOOD" SLIPPER" *(St. James's)*; "PETER PAN" *(Stoll)*; "CINDERELLA" *(Winter*

N.B.—While we shall always do our best to keep this list up to date, Consult your daily paper; ring up



"Wilson," long heralded two-and-three-quarter-hour Technicolor film of President Wilson and the first World War, is due at the Odeon on January 4. ALEXANDER KNOX *plays Wilson; Clemenceau (left) is played by* MARCEL DALIO, *Lloyd George by* CLIFFORD BROOKE.



The Galerie des Glaces, Versailles, with the important figures who signed the Peace Treaty in 1919. Darryl F. Zanuck has directed this colossal Twentieth Century-Fox production, and every effort has been made to ensure authenticity on the sets.

An odd little film has been privately shown in London which, I suppose, for want of a better word, we shall have to describe as a documentary. It is called "OUT OF CHAOS," and it is an attempt to illustrate, on the screen, the wartime work of a number of British painters and sculptors. You might call it a comradely gesture from one sort of picture-makers to another sort of picture-makers.

Miss Jill Craigie, who has written and directed the film, sets out to show that the war has proved to be a stimulus, and not a deterrent, to British art. She brings Sir Kenneth Clark, Director of the National Portrait Gallery, on to the screen, to describe the aims of the War Artists' Advisory Committee—a body constituted "to choose artists to make a record of the war, not simply a record of the facts, but a record of what the war *felt* like."

Famous British artists are shown at work: Anthony Cross on a gun-site; Stanley Spencer in the shipyards; Paul Nash studying the 90 acres of wrecked German aeroplanes he used as the subject of his celebrated painting "Totes Meer." Henry Moore, the sculptor, is seen developing, from the first rough draft, the study of sleeping women that forms part of his series of shelter drawings. Finally, Eric Newton, the art critic, explains a canvas of Graham Sutherland's to a group of assorted visitors at the National Gallery, taking the opportunity of slipping in a few cultural hints about the way to look at pictures generally.

It is a commendable idea, this acknowledgment of pictures by The Pictures, and people with some smattering of an idea what the artists are at will probably be delighted by it. I can't myself, though, imagine "Out of Chaos" sending movie audiences rushing to the art galleries in large bodies. In some way, this eager and honest little piece has just stopped short of being persuasive. To a large extent, I think, it is the absence of colour. It does seem reasonable to suggest that a film about paintings, if it is to be made at all, should be made in colour. I have heard happier commentaries, too, than the one devised for "Out of Chaos." "He absorbed the emotional side of a scene, and put his impressions on canvas with force and vitality" (or words to that effect), observes Miss Craigie, as a young man delicately shades in an inch or so of canvas with a small brush.

"Madonna of the Seven Moons" (Gaumont and Marble Arch Pavilion), taken from Margery Lawrence's book, stars PHYLLIS CALVERT *as Madonna, Maddalena and Rosanna, a girl with triple schizophrenia. In our picture, Madonna leaves the convent, her education finished.*

Starred by "The Sketch." * * *=*top-score.*

* * "SOMETHING IN THE AIR" *(Palace).* Jack Hulbert, Cicely Courtneidge.

* * "HAPPY AND GLORIOUS" *(Palladium).* Revue with Tommy Trinder, Zoë Gail, Elisabeth Welch.

* * "SCANDAL AT BARCHESTER" *(Wyndham's).* Trollope with Felix Aylmer, Milton Rosmer, Olga Lindo, Dorothy Hyson.

* * "PRIVATE LIVES" *(Apollo).* Noel Coward revival, with Kay Hammond, John Clements.

* "MEET ME VICTORIA" *(Victoria Palace).* Cockney humour with Lupino Lane, Dorothy Ward.

* "NO MEDALS" *(Vaudeville).* Wartime housewife. Fay Compton.

* "ANOTHER LOVE STORY" *(Phœnix).* Lonsdale comedy with Anton Walbrook, Roland Culver, Judy Campbell.

* "THE MAGISTRATE" *(St. Martin's).* Pinero's Victorian comedy revived. Denys Blakelock, Avice Landone, Derek Blomfield.

* "IT DEPENDS WHAT YOU MEAN" *(Westminster).* Bridie's latest. Alastair Sim, Angela Baddeley.

* "THREE'S A FAMILY" *(Saville).* Comedy. With Vera Pearce.

* "IS YOUR HONEYMOON REALLY NECESSARY?" *(Duke of York's).* Ralph Lynn, Enid Stamp Taylor.

* "THIS WAS A WOMAN" *(Comedy).* Sonia Dresdel in melodrama.

* "THE LAST OF MRS. CHEYNEY" *(Savoy).* Jack Buchanan, Coral Browne, Athene Seyler.

(His Majesty's); "ALICE IN WONDERLAND" *(Palace, mornings)*; "THE GLASS Garden)*; "ONCE UPON A TIME" *(from Hans Andersen) (Adelphi).*

we cannot hold ourselves responsible for any errors which may occur. the theatre to avoid disappointment.

The background of the film is Italy. Here Rosanna (PHYLLIS CALVERT) *tells artist Jimmy* (PETER MURRAY-HILL) *that she belongs to nobody but herself. The film is reviewed on this page.*

"MADONNA OF THE SEVEN MOONS" (Gaumont and Marble Arch Pavilion) is, according to the synopsis, "the story of a girl with a 'split' mind. In medical language," it adds informatively, "the correct term is SCHIZOPHRENIA." I don't quite understand the significance of these capitals, unless the idea is to create the impression that this film is somehow FRIGHTFULLY IMPORTANT. If so, that wasn't the impression I got from simply watching the thing.

"Madonna of the Seven Moons" seems to me a nice, chaste British bid at establishing an atmosphere of hot Latin passion. It tells the story of a convent-bred Italian girl, Maddalena (Phyllis Calvert), who has been assaulted by a gipsy in the woods, and lives a double life as the result of the shock; sometimes the wife of a respectable wine merchant (John Stuart), and sometimes the mistress of a jewel thief (Stewart Granger) in the underworld of Florence. There is a secondary and even less convincing story in which Maddalena's daughter (Patricia Roc) is LURED into the CLUTCHES of a gigolo (Peter Glenville), and saved by an incredibly youthful member of the British Diplomatic Service (Alan Haines).

NORA BAYES *sings "My Own United States" in Warner's "Shine on, Harvest Moon" (Warner, December 22), a back- and on-stage musical of a vaudeville team who end up in the Ziegfeld Follies of 1907. Stars are Ann Sheridan (this week's "Sketch" pin-up girl), Dennis Morgan, Jack Carson, Irene Manning.*

The obviously substantial amount of money expended on lavish settings, brilliant camera-work and earnest endeavour cannot really persuade us to believe in Italian thugs with the refined accents of Eton and Oxford, or in a heroine who talks and acts, even in SCHIZOPHRENIA, as though she has just left Roedean on her way to Girton. "Madonna of the Seven Moons" could not have been nicer or more modest if it had been an end-of-term entertainment provided by the enthusiastic members of a good girls' school. With a different script and bolder handling, it might have turned into a fair melodrama. Several characters, it is true, are very satisfactorily stabbed to death, with what the synopsis calls "stilletos," but as this only occurs in the last reel, it is too late to do anybody much good.

STAR COMEDY PLAYWRIGHT AT HOME—TERENCE RATTIGAN.

Over the mantelpiece in the lounge of TERENCE RATTIGAN'S Albany flat hangs a fine portrait of Charles I.

Apparently schizophrenic, he works on a script while answering the ever-ringing telephone.

Fond of chess, Rattigan plays with ivory chessmen on a lacquer board.

Successful playwright silhouetted in the light of a lamp built into a Chinese vase.

IF ever there was a success-story, it is that of TERENCE RATTIGAN, Flight-Lieutenant, R.A.F. Born in 1911, he was only twenty-three when his first play, aptly titled "First Episode," went on at the Comedy Theatre, and the Ritz, New York. In 1936 "French Without Tears" ran for over a thousand performances, went to New York, and was filmed. His R.A.F. play "Flare Path" had a great success at the Apollo. "While the Sun Shines" is on at the Globe. And, greatest compliment possible, the distinguished players Alfred Lunt and Lynn Fontanne chose his new play "Love in Idleness" to star in at the Lyric. Mr. Rattigan was educated at Harrow and Trinity College, Oxford. He is unmarried; has a flat in Albany; his recreations are golf, squash, and watching cricket.

WE TAKE OFF OUR HAT TO—

GENERAL DE GAULLE, for being France's leader and a man of deeds rather than words.

From the maelstrom of capitulating France in June 1940 rose GENERAL CHARLES ANDRÉ JOSEPH MARIE DE GAULLE *to hoist aloft the banner of his country with continued French resistance. After distinguished service in command of an armoured unit he became Under-Secretary of State for War in Reynaud's Cabinet. When Pétain cried " Il faut cesser le combat " de Gaulle escaped to England and, broadcasting from London, invited all French officers and men, engineers and skilled workmen in Britain to rally to his call. Ever since he has worked with all that in him lay in the service of France, against Germany. In October he received full Allied recognition as leader of the Provisional Government of France, a step of the highest diplomatic significance. Now he has visited Moscow and signed with Marshal Stalin a Franco-Soviet Treaty. General de Gaulle was born in Lille in 1890; educated at the College Stanislas, Paris, and the École Militaire at St.-Cyr; wounded and mentioned in despatches in the last war. A tank expert, he has written several books and lectured at the Sorbonne. Clear-minded and lucid, he is a man of action as well as a dreamer. In 1921 he married Mlle. Yvonne Vendroux; they have one son and two daughters.* (PHOTOGRAPH BY CECIL BEATON.)

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GREER GARSON AS AN AMERICAN MATRIARCH:

Humble beginnings: Susie Graham (GREER GARSON), *seventeen-year-old daughter of a boarding-house keeper in Leaping Rock, Nevada* (RHEA MITCHELL; *left*).

The beautiful Mrs. Parkington (GREER GARSON *in a Victoria with Aspasia*

"MRS. PARKINGTON" is M.-G.-M.'s film version of Louis Bromfield's best-seller novel, the epic story of a fabulously rich, fantastically famous old woman, worldly and indomitable. Susie Parkington (GREER GARSON) first appears, at the age of seventeen, as the daughter of a boarding-house keeper at Leaping Water, Nevada. Her mother is killed by an explosion in a mine belonging to Major Augustus Parkington, flamboyant, ruthless financier, who has met Susie, and is attracted by her. He has not the slightest idea of making her his wife, but Susie has marked him down as her husband-to-be, and gets her way all right. A new life opens for her, and as the wealthy, lovely Mrs. Parkington she travels

[*Continued opposite.*

Parkington fell in love with Susie at Leaping Rock, but had no thought of marriage. She, however, meant business from the start and easily gets her way; for Parkington feels genuine pity when Susie's mother is killed.

Christmas Eve, 1938: The Stilhams' gi (GLADYS COOPER), *Madeleine* (LEE PAT *Amory, Cowboy* (ROD CAMME

N.B. A Coloured plate is inserted in this issue.

"MRS. PARKINGTON"—SUPREME IN AGE AND YOUTH.

R GARSON)*at the height of her social success, out driving*
th Aspasia Conti (AGNES MOOREHEAD).

Major Augustus Parkington (WALTER PIDGEON) *gets into high society, and plays billiards with the Prince of Wales* (CECIL KELLAWAY ; *later Edward VII.*). TALA BIRELL *(right).*

lhams' girl (ELEN FREEMAN), *Mrs. Parkington, Alice*
LEE PATRI; *and (standing) Jack* (DAN DURYEA),
D CAMMERO *Humphrey* (HARRY CORDING).

Amory Stilham (EDWARD ARNOLD) *greets the eighty-four-year-old Mrs. Parkington, wealthy, worldly, indomitable and almost a legendary figure. Her children are a worthless lot, always getting into trouble, and she gets them out.*

Continued.]
across Europe, meets everyone "worth knowing," and remains full of zest and enjoyment of her social power and her amusing existence until the very end of it all. Her children, however, are a worthless brood. Alice, the girl who marries a French duke and gets divorced; Madeleine, who takes husband after husband, ending with a cowboy; and the troublesome Stilham family. They all pile on Mrs. Parkington's thin, erect shoulders the problems which they have neither the courage nor the wisdom to solve. In this absorbing chronicle film of a matriarch's life, Greer has the whale of a part, and has thirty-four different changes of costume and hair-do during the course of the picture, which runs over a period of sixty-seven years.

WIFE AND DAUGHTER OF THE BRITISH G.O.C. IN GREECE.

MRS. RONALD MACKENZIE SCOBIE *and* MISS JANE SCOBIE *are the wife and daughter of Major-General (Acting Lieut.-General) Ronald MacKenzie Scobie, C.B., C.B.E., M.C., the British General Officer Commanding in Greece, who has to carry out the trying and difficult work of restoring order in Athens. In his message to the Greek people on December 1, before civil war had broken out, he said: "I am determined . . . to make a success of the tasks assigned to me by my Government. I am against terrorism, violence or bullying, from whatever quarter it may come." He is a distinguished soldier, and was G.O.C. Tobruk fortress in the epic days of 1941, then G.O.C. Malta, and in 1943 was appointed C.G.S. Middle East. Mrs. Scobie, who is living at Cheltenham, where seventeen-year-old Jane is in her second year at the girls' college, works hard in a British restaurant, preparing vegetables and serving customers.*

AS THEY *FEEL* THE WAR: OFFICIAL WAR ARTISTS FILMED IN "OUT OF CHAOS."

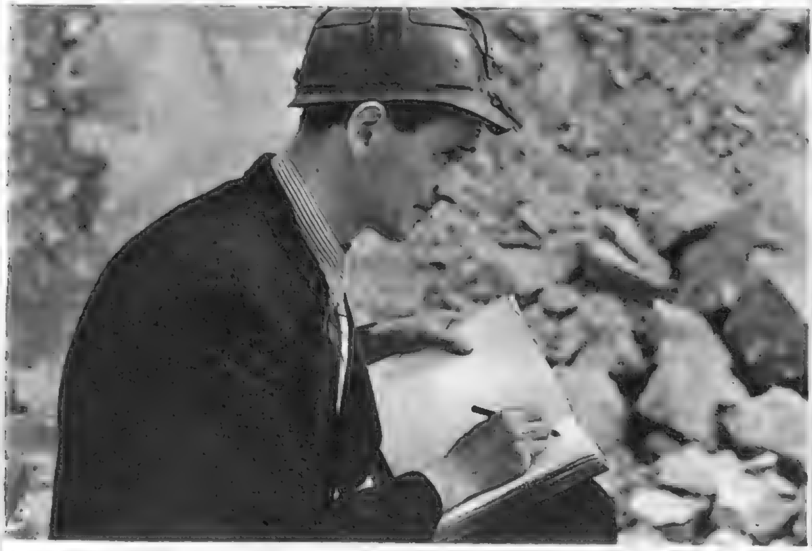
STANLEY SPENCER *(resigned A.R.A.) sketches on Clydeside, with a background of ships on the stocks. Well known for big murals, and crowded canvases, sometimes of controversial character.*

PAUL NASH *in action at the vast mound of German 'plane salvage known as the Cowley Dump. Here he painted his famous "Totes Meer," or Dead Sea.*

SIR KENNETH CLARK, K.C.B., *set up the War Artists' Advisory Committee to choose artists to record what the war felt like.*

SHOWING some of our war artists at work, Two Cities' film "Out of Chaos" is designed to stimulate interest not only in the National Gallery War Artists' Exhibition, but also in modern painting generally. The commentary claims that pictorial art, though much of it is difficult to the common man, has moved closer to him, and Sir Kenneth Clark comes before the camera to describe the aims of his Committee. Artists are chosen to depict the *feeling* of war upon themselves, and painters such as Stanley Spencer, Henry Moore, Paul Nash and Anthony Gross are seen sketching and making drawings on gun-sites, in shipyards and in shelters during an air raid. Eric Newton presides over a heated argument between those who understand only representational art, those who know what pleases them, and the pundits who glibly trot out the current catch-phrases of art.

Art critic ERIC NEWTON *is responsible for explaining away much public bewilderment concerning modern art.*

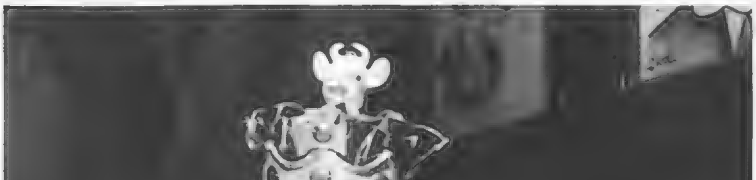


GRAHAM SUTHERLAND *finds his inspiration in the milieu of blitzed London; is at work among the débris of bombed houses.*

LEONARD ROSEMAN, *a discovery of the Firemen Artists' Exhibitions, also appears in the film.*

The KEEP-OFF COAT, *for congested tubes, trams, buses and queues! Ed Wynn, all spiky; and wearing a hat with a removable brim, for politeness without risk of cold.*

Sure and simple REMEDY FOR THE ALARM-CLOCK SHORTAGE: *the eight-hour candle, guaranteed to wake the sleeper in good time by burning his ear.*



CORN ON THE COB WITHOUT EFFORT: *the cob moves past the mouth on a roller until the bell rings, and the cob can be turned, so that the next row comes up.*

The SPONGE CUFF, *which covers the whole wrist and ensures comfort when eating asparagus, and avoids all danger of the melted butter (or "marge"!) dripping down the sleeve.*

ED WYNN'S HEATH ROBINSONIAN DEVICES TO CURE LIFE'S LITTLE MISERIES.

Biscuit CRUMB CATCHER *for messy eaters ; it saves every scrap of those precious sweet biscuits bought on points, and prevents untidiness.*

The neat way to COOL YOUR COFFEE *by getting it into the saucer without spilling a drop ; the lever on the handle releases the liquid in a tiny stream into the saucer.*

Those who must polish their plates, so as to enjoy every drop of gravy, can wear a bracelet with chained thimbles to PRESERVE THE FINGER-TIPS FROM GREASE.

And here's PERFECT SECURITY FROM GRAPE - FRUIT JUICE *being shot into the eyes (when we get any to shoot !). The shade can be let down and raised at will.*

ED WYNN, popular horse-faced comedian, has just returned to the radio in the U.S.A. as King Bubbles, in "Happy Island." His Majesty tries to make the world happier by defeating life's little miseries, with Heath Robinsonian skill. He's funny enough heard, yet funnier still if you can see him!

MRS. BROWNING'S BUCCANEERING FILM.

"FRENCHMAN'S CREEK," Paramount's Technicolor version of Daphne du Maurier's novel, "Frenchman's Creek," was due for its gala *première* at the Plaza on December 21 in aid of Stage Door Canteen. Miss Du Maurier is the wife of General F. A. M. Browning, newly-appointed Chief of Staff to Lord Louis Mountbatten; and a photograph of her with her family appears on our front page. "Frenchman's Creek" is a swashbuckling story set in the seventeenth century. The hero is a French pirate, and the heroine a high-born lady who falls in love with him and goes off on the high seas as his cabin boy, but finally returns to a domestic life in order to look after her children. The Cornish coast of the period, setting for the story, was reproduced on location at Albion, Mendocina County, some 600 miles north of Hollywood. The production cost over three million dollars.

Rockingham (BASIL RATHBONE), *dissolute comrade of Lord St. Columb and Edmond* (HARALD RAMOND), *at a London gaming house, with Dona St. Columb, who disapproves of the place.*

Dona St. Columb (JOAN FONTAINE) *gazes at the pirate ship, "La Mouette," specially built for the film on corsair lines over the hull of the "Matthew Claiborne."*

Dona St. Columb falls in love with the French pirate, Jean Benoit Aubery (ARTURO DE CORDOVA), *whose manners and morals are infinitely superior to those of her gamester husband.*

The great lady prepares to leave home, and try life as a cabin boy aboard the pirate's ship: JOAN FONTAINE *as Dona St. Columb. She has fallen in love with the pirate, Jean Benoit Aubery, and has decided to leave her dissolute husband.*

Furiously jealous, the evil Lord Rockingham (BASIL RATHBONE) *attempts to strangle Dona St. Columb* (JOAN FONTAINE), *who has rejected his advances. She manages to kill him with his own dagger.*

MARLENE DIETRICH *as Marsinah, beautiful daughter of Hafiz, magician-beggar of Bagdad, in her new picture, "Kismet." This is one of the all-glamour harem sequences.*

MARLENE DIETRICH AS A GILDED HAREM QUEEN.

"KISMET," new M.G.M. Technicolor "Arabian Nights" film, due at the Empire on Friday, December 22, is a most sumptuous affair, starring Marlene Dietrich as the lovely Marsinah, whose father has promised that she shall marry a prince. In some of the sequences she appears with an amazing hair-do which took hours to achieve and consists of her own hair and a switch round a 6-in. horse-hair cone; and with her famous legs completely gilded. The story tells how Marsinah falls in love with a gardener, who turns out to be a Calif. Her father Hafiz, the magician-beggar, prophesied that she would marry a prince.

Marsinah, with her legs painted to look like shimmering gold, and wearing a most elaborate "hair-do"; with the Grand Vizier Mansur (EDWARD ARNOLD) *and her father Hafiz* (RONALD COLMAN; *right*).

THE LITERARY LOUNGER.

By L. P. HARTLEY.

"FAIR STOOD THE WIND FOR FRANCE" is an "escape" story. Flying Officer John Franklin and his crew of four sergeants are returning from a raid in North Italy when the airscrew fails and the aeroplane crashes in Occupied France. Franklin's arm is badly cut; the rest are unhurt. After one rebuff they are taken in by a farmer's family and hidden in a mill-house (the river plays a vital part in the story). Franklin's arm gets worse, and eventually has to be amputated; but meanwhile he has persuaded the sergeants, who are loath to leave him, to try to escape to England. He himself lingers on, falling ever more deeply in love with Françoise, the farmer's daughter, until he too is well enough to think of escape.

Love and Fear. For the sake of unity, Mr. Bates has simplified the moods and motives of his story, so that it is like a picture painted in many shades of a few colours. The first part is dominated by Franklin's physical state, and the reader must have robust nerves who does not feel in himself the rising temperature, the sickness, the faintness, the torturing sense of unreality, stronger than love, stronger than fear. Restored to health, fear and love become paramount in Franklin—fear of the Germans, which is in the air he breathes, fear of betrayal; love of Françoise and fear of losing her. Mr. Bates does not try to make the French talk like the French; Franklin and his hosts all use the clipped, laconic speech of people afraid of being overheard and unwilling to voice their fears. Their personalities are subdued to fear and love, and there is little characterisation, except of the broadest kind, until towards the end, when hope dawns for the fugitives. The atmosphere is lyrical with love and tense with fear, and most of the episodes illustrate one or other of those emotions, though there is delicious dry humour in the scene where Françoise barters the boat for bicycles, and some not quite so successful comic relief in Franklin's tea-party with the two old ladies in Marseilles.

The story keeps its excitement to the last page. Like all novels in which the emphasis falls on the immediate happening, it has not much philosophic background, or background of any sort. Françoise and Franklin (one notes the symbolism in their names) are sustained by mutual faith and love—and his leans on hers. Mr. Bates is a poet who can always delight us with a pregnant phrase: "he felt the ripeness of the world split by the pain of his own reluctance," and the whole story has a poet's unity of conception. Looking back, we realise that elements of wish-fulfilment and romanticism have entered in. Perhaps no one ever escaped like this, borne up by Cupid's wings. But we only wish they had.

The Belgian Ambassador, BARON DE CARTIER DE MARCHIENNE *(right), opened an exhibition of Flemish Old Masters in aid of Belgian children at the Milton Galleries, 138, New Bond Street. On the left is the art expert,* DR. TANCRED BORENIUS, *with the* DUQUESA DE MONTORO *and her father, the* DUKE OF ALBA, *the Spanish Ambassador.*

The Pioneer Corps. Members of other branches of the Forces sometimes make jokes about the Pioneer Corps, and quite possibly the public joins in, without really knowing what the Pioneer Corps is like. Mr. Alfred Perlès tells us. "Alien Corn" is the story of his experiences in that corps.

"In the British Army," he says, "an alien could be but a Pioneer, and, being an alien, I was to be a Pioneer. Incidentally I do not like that word, *alien;* the word has a derogatory, hostile, almost cruel ring." From this, and from the fact that Mr. Perlès speaks of the "anguish" of a Medical Board, one might suspect that he started with a grievance against his new calling. If so, he quickly lost it. "Alien Corn" is a most appreciative book.

Mr. Perlès has the kind of humility that enables a man to get on easily with other men. Not a cringing or self-belittling kind of humility, for he is always on good terms with himself. When he writes in his journal "The Army has a peculiar effect upon the soldier, even the intelligent soldier: it endears itself to him"—we know that, quite rightly, he is counting himself among intelligent soldiers. Having no vanity makes him untouchy and a just observer of his fellows. It also makes him ready to change his mind and admit when he is wrong. His book is full of revised opinions, both of men and things. Possibly he is a little too prone to demonstrate his open-mindedness and lack of priggishness: "I am not prepared to talk about Scottish weather at any length, but I will say this much: it is bad, and I like it. The atmosphere is nearly always visible; the weather hangs in the air, like floating refuse, which I find rather poetic." Like Sir Thomas Browne's, "his temper is so general that it consorteth with all things," and there are few of his fellow-Pioneers about whom he does not find something kind as well as amusing to say. I fancy he even has a good word for Sergeant-Major Keats.

A Dual Life. Somerset, London in the blitz of 1940-41 and Scotland were the principal scenes of his activities, and he has a painter's eye for the detail and feeling of a landscape, especially for the personalities of trees. But men are his theme; men on duty, men off duty, above all, men in relationship to the Army. "The beauty of being a soldier lies in the fact that it enables a man to lead a dual life: he can be a soldier *and* a man: the soldier becomes the outward crust, the man withdrawing to his own centre." And again: "The Army makes use of a man's individuality . . . but it does not destroy it. It merely lets it lie low: fallow, as it were."

Most of Mr. Perlès fellow-Pioneers were Germans; many of them in private life were men of wealth and cultivation. The wealth was not much use to them and the cultivation they tended to "let lie fallow, as it were": in spite of the language difficulty, they appear quickly to have picked up the words in commonest use among English soldiers. In fact, they are "alien" only in name: and this clever, lively, well-written book closes with a plea that this disability should be taken from them.

Americans in Italy. "A Walk in the Sun" shows us another detachment of soldiers: a platoon of Americans, on active service in Italy. They have just landed and we are with them only a few hours, but long enough to see several of them killed by machine-gun fire from enemy aircraft as they slowly feel their way to their objective, the farm on the river. Other episodes are the attack on a German armoured car, a long (perhaps too long) interview with two war-weary and disheartened Italian soldiers, and a brief interview with a mysterious despatch-rider.

Mr. Brown never dots his "i's," but none the less he extracts from each episode an almost uncomfortably vivid impression of the dangers, known and unknown, that lie in wait for an invading force: we feel in every nerve the wariness and the weariness of Sergeant Porter's men. The Sergeant feels them all too keenly; soon he is out of action, a nervous wreck, and Corporal Tyne takes over. These men are sharply individualised; each has some trait we remember him by—Sergeant Ward by his longing for apples, Graven by his letter to his sister, Archimbeau by his prevision of war in Tibet, Rivera and Friedman by their continuous back-chat, and the "butt" which the one demands of the other. They call the Germans Krauts instead of Jerries, and there are other differences, easy to feel but hard to define, between these American soldiers and ours; but their humour of ironic understatement, though so differently expressed, is common to both.

American writers have excelled at the short novel. If "A Walk in the Sun" does not quite come up to "The Gipsy" and "The S.S. *San Pedro,*" it deserves a very high place in that small but honourable company, for not only is it a faithful piece of reporting, it is equally satisfying as a record of the undertones of war and of the "personal things uppermost in the minds" of the soldiers, which is "their defence against the violence of the world."

A Poisoned Dish. A vegetable duck (for the benefit of those unacquainted with this dish) is "a marrow, stuffed with mincemeat and herbs, and baked whole." It was the *pièce de résistance* of Mrs. Fransham's supper. Like Juvenal's toadstool, it sufficed: she never required another. Her husband had been unexpectedly called away, so he survived; but as he had already been involved in an unsolved murder case, suspicion naturally fastened on him. There was a convenient bottle of poison in the flat. But it turned out not to be the kind of poison used in the marrow, and Inspector Jimmy Waghorn became convinced that the murder was an outside job.

Superintendent Hanslet has a very minor rôle in this story, and even Dr. Priestley, though as hospitable and sarcastic as ever, is not quite as helpful. A rather sinister figure looms up—Massingham, the private inquiry agent—but, on the whole, as is usual with Mr. Rhode, the characters are kept strictly to business and not encouraged to flaunt their personalities. Had Waghorn hit upon one important clue sooner, the chase would have considerably shortened—but no one could wish that, for "Vegetable Duck," albeit a poisoned dish, never cloys on the palate.

BOOKS REVIEWED.

Fair Stood the Wind for France. By H. E. Bates. (*Michael Joseph; 9s. 6d.*)
Alien Corn. By Alfred Perlès. (*George Allen and Unwin; 8s. 6d.*)
A Walk in the Sun. By Harry Brown. (*Secker and Warburg; 6s.*)
Vegetable Duck. By John Rhode. (*Collins; 8s. 6d.*)

Pin-up Girl:
No. 16. Ann Sheridan.

ANN SHERIDAN *appears as Nora Bayes in "Shine On, Harvest Moon," the new Warner Brothers picture based on the life of the popular American singer, due at the Warner Theatre, Leicester Square, on December 22. The picture is a mixture of gay music and fast-paced story, depicting the well-known star's rise from "honky-tonks" to the glory of a Ziegfeld stage. Dennis Morgan plays opposite to Ann Sheridan as Nora's husband, Jack Norworth.*

MISS PONSONBY'S CHRISTMAS EVE.*

By ESMÉ WYNNE-TYSON.

IT seemed to Miss Ponsonby that she had been in bed a very long time. Certainly ten o'clock had been early to come to bed, especially on Christmas Eve, but after two days at Brambledon Lodge she was still very conscious of her solitude, from which she had hoped to escape by spending Christmas at a guest-house.

" Large country guest-house. Cheerful company. Log fires. Own produce."

It seemed to offer all the ingredients of a traditional English Christmas, with luxuries rare in the sixth winter of the war.

But now she was not so sure that she had been right to come. Five days didn't really give you time to get to know people, and there was so much preparation going on. . . . It is true she had been one of the squad that went out in the grounds to collect holly and evergreens, and it had been quite good fun helping to decorate the large hall and the Christmas-tree, but most of the people there seemed to have their own families or particular friends, and in spite of their obvious attempts to be companionable and festive, she had from time to time been acutely conscious of that lonely feeling she had sought to avoid by joining up with a cheery crowd for the holiday. And by ten o'clock she had been quite ready for bed. Everyone seemed busy with their own concerns. It had been easy to slip away unnoticed . . .

But not so easy to get to sleep, once in bed.

It was not noisy. Brambledon Lodge was very isolated and surrounded by trees, but small waves of noise occasionally stirred the ocean of silence—children's voices when a door opened, hurrying footsteps, chatter and laughter as a party came to bed, now and then, whisperings on the landing . . .

Christmas Eve! What a time it was for most people! Especially those with children.

In the usual way, Miss Ponsonby wasted no regrets on the fact that she had not married and had children. They would have been a great handicap to her business career, and Miss Ponsonby was fond of her work. But at Christmas-time it all seemed much ado about nothing without children, and if you went where children were you only seemed to get the backwash of their noisy enjoyment when they weren't your own. In fact, she was coming to think that Christmas was rather a mistake for adults like herself; a tiresome interruption of the daily routine, no work, no shops open, irregular posts, a time of mild irritations best spent, perhaps, with books and sewing in your own rooms instead of pretending to enjoy it with a large party of strangers . . .

It had been different when she was a child, and she and her sister Effie had lain, as she was lying now, in the darkness, trying to sleep, but too excited at the thought of the bedroom-door silently opening and a slant of light revealing Someone—someone who carried bulky parcels.

Oh, yes! There had been a thrill about Christmas in those days with Effie. Perhaps if Effie had still been alive they might even now have recaptured together some of the thrill of those early days by talking of them. But she had lost even Effie.

Oh, well, it didn't do to dwell on times and folk that were gone. The thing to do was to make the most of what was left and try to enjoy the present. There was always the chance that something would come along—something . . .

It was just at that point in her reflections that Miss Ponsonby's heart missed a beat and she listened with her whole strained attention. Surely that was the handle of *her* door being turned?

And she hadn't locked it!

Now, in the ordinary way, Miss Ponsonby would have sat up in bed and firmly demanded who was at the door, but to-night the traditional habit of Christmas Eve held, and she lay breathlessly still as the slant of light widened from the opening door and revealed a figure carrying a bulky parcel—a figure that hesitated in the doorway and then quietly tiptoed into the room.

Miss Ponsonby lay rigid. The whole thrill of the lost years was upon her—the stealthy approach to the bed, the subdued crackle of brown paper as the large parcel was carefully placed at its foot, the pause, then the quiet retreat on tiptoe to the door, the softly-turned handle, and once again the impenetrable darkness.

Someone had decided to play Father Christmas for her benefit.

Who could it possibly be? She tried to still the excited beating of her heart with calm reasoning. Perhaps it was a delightful habit of the management in order to induce a seasonable spirit? But no, she decided, with a definite sense of relief at not having to arrive at so prosaic a solution, it was certainly not the management, which consisted of two businesslike, matter-of-fact middle-aged women who would never permit themselves such flights of fancy. True, there was the handyman, but he was a tall, lanky creature; certainly not the broad-shouldered, reliable-looking figure that had stood silhouetted in her doorway.

Now she came to think of it, it had looked rather like that charming Mr. Newton, who had given her tea on the first day and had talked with her so pleasantly at lunch. She had thought he was interested in—if not definitely engaged to—the pretty young girl who had sat on his other side, Miss Kelsey. But she might have been mistaken. Men were queer creatures. Miss Kelsey hadn't much to say for herself, and he might have begun to realise that he wanted more than just pretty looks. A sensible woman, perhaps, more of his own age. He 'd certainly seemed to enjoy their little talk, but really . . .

She mustn't let her imagination run away with her. But who else *could* it be? There was that elderly man who had looked at her so pointedly when they were all listening to the nine o'clock news last night. Perhaps, now she came to think of it, he *had* rather followed her about with his eyes . . . Of course, there was nothing in it, but he might just be a rich, eccentric man who liked to give pleasure to people, to anyone who happened, for some reason or other, to take his fancy . . . He wasn't good-looking, like Mr. Newton, but a man with such a kind nature . . . It would be a fine opportunity to get to know him better when she thanked him for the present.

The present! What could it be? What *could* it be? She wanted to put on the light and find out there and then, but you *must* obey the rules on Christmas Eve. It wouldn't be fair to look before morning.

But what *could* it be? How could anyone whose fancy she had taken manage to get anything suitable at such short notice? Especially with everything on coupons or points.

Of course, there were flowers—a lovely big box such as the film-stars used to receive in pre-war pictures, bronze, copper and gold chrysanthemums, great heads on enormously tall stalks. Perhaps her copper-coloured afternoon dress with the gold leaves worked on the bodice had inspired him? She had always liked that dress.

Or it might be fruit, though that was difficult nowadays. Of course, really rich men could get anything. How romantic if old Mr. Payne were really *very* rich and had taken a *lasting* fancy, and remembered her in his will!

Suddenly life had lost all its loneliness and drabness and become full of excitement and potentiality again. Obviously, anything might happen in such a thrillingly unexpected world; things did happen, *had* happened. She could prove it every time she thrust out her foot and caused the paper on the parcel to crackle faintly as it moved . . .

She was far, far too excited to sleep, but she didn't mind whether she slept or not. It was lovely lying there in thrilled, delicious anticipation of Christmas morning, and perhaps of life starting all over again . . .

But she must have slept a little, for when she next opened her eyes there was a thin, grey border of light around the black-out curtains.

And then she remembered.

In a moment the light was switched on and she was feverishly fumbling at the knot of the string which tied a most unexpectedly heavy parcel. Inside the paper was a long, brown box. And when Miss Ponsonby raised the lid it was to find the gleaming engine of a large toy train with a full set of shining rails . . .

" To think that I gate-crashed into that old girl's room and dumped it on her bed," the proud father of an only son was saying to the giggling crowd which stood round the open fireplace in the hall, waiting for breakfast. " John was pretty indignant, I can tell you. He came along to his mother and me about 6 a.m., complaining that Father Christmas had not done his job, and then, of course, I realised I 'd made a mistake about the room. Well, of course, John wanted me to go and rescue it then and there, but I managed to hold him back till seven, and then I had to knock twice before Miss P. heard me. She opened the door a few inches, shoved the parcel round, and said: ' Is it this you 're wanting? ' Sounded a bit sniffy, I thought. But there, these old girls have forgotten what Christmas is about. However, all 's well that ends well," he concluded, amid general laughter, as the breakfast gong sounded.

THE END.

**All the characters and incidents in this story are imaginary.*

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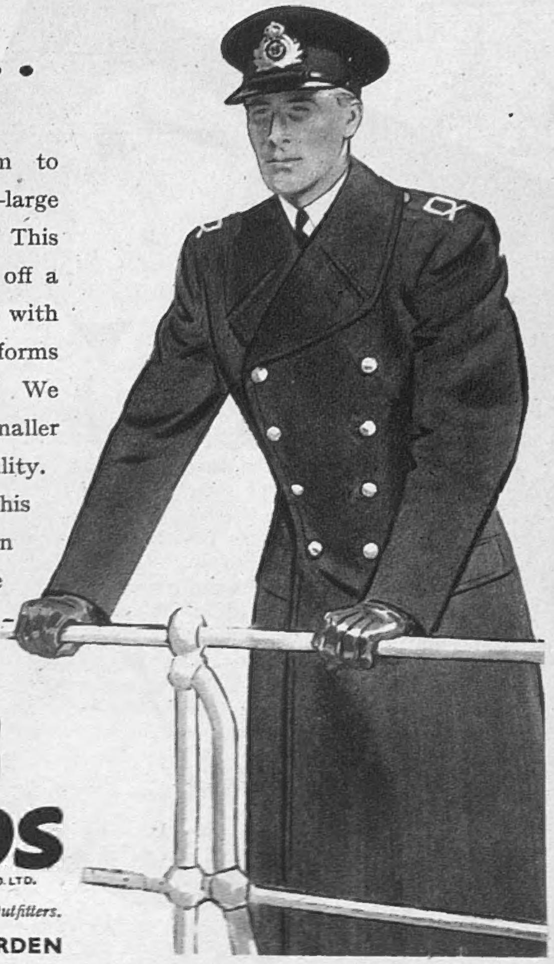

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Advertisement of The General Electric Co. Ltd., Magnet House, Kingsway, W.C.2

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Colette is a pure wool jacket hand-woven by the Loom Art Company in all kinds of attractive colour combinations. This one is yellow with blue stripes: it has a well-tailored rever collar and buttons high, £8 17s. 1d. From *Harrods*.

Angora has been used to make this young-looking pull-over the cosiest thing imaginable. It is one of a collection of boldly-striped jumpers at *Marshall and Snelgrove*. £7 2s. 5d.

Alpaca wool makes this soft but warm overblouse. The contrast colour striping is effective and gay; the very full sleeves making it something quite out of the ordinary. Both blouse and skirt are from *Marshall and Snelgrove*; the blouse, £4 4s. 3d.; the skirt, £3 0s. 2d.

Juliet is another of the many-coloured, hand-woven designs at *Harrods*. It has full bishop sleeves caught attractively into wide fitting cuff bands with a belt effect woven into the material. £8 9s. 11.

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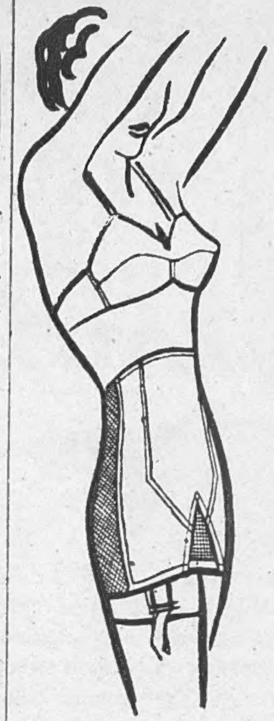

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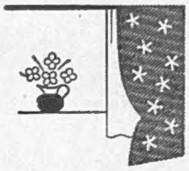

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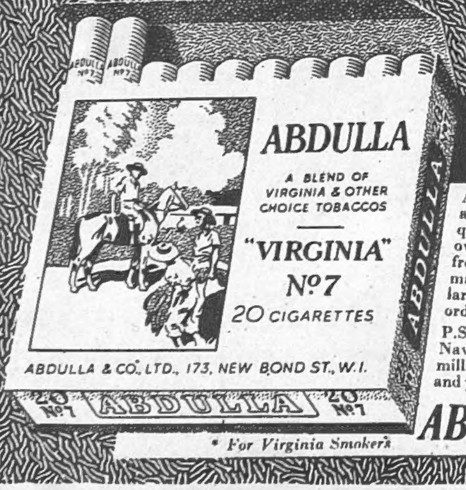

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